

# **Prescribed Burning Public Outreach Protocol**

## **Overview**

This Outreach Protocol “Protocol” has been developed to assist land and air management agencies with all phases of prescribed burning/smoke management outreach. It includes:

- Identification of key audiences for different times of the outreach process;
- Identification of outreach methodologies, materials, and resources available to deliver consistent land/air quality manager messages – including factsheets, webpage information sources, and a general prescribed burning/smoke management powerpoint presentation; and,
- An “Outreach Outline” for outreach steps that should be taken -- from the time of burn project conceptualization, months in advance of the burn, through the periods immediately prior to, during, and after the burn.

## **Key Target Audiences**

- Public Health Officials
- Local Elected Officials
- Populations in neighboring counties and states
- General Public
- Local print media
- Local TV and Radio Broadcasters

## **General Message**

A key message that should be presented to the public is that there is a substantial planning and decision-making process in place – required by law – to manage prescribed burning and smoke emissions. The public needs to know that land and air quality managers work together closely and cooperatively to minimize the impacts of smoke and protect public health. The air and land managers need to spend some time meeting prior to the first public meetings in order to ensure that each group is comfortable with the public message that will be delivered. In addition, the message should be clear that land and air managers value and honor public comments and the democratic process, and the public’s comments will be considered in the aggregate in land/smoke management decisions.

## **Outreach Outline**

The Outline below addresses the following four phases of the burn/smoke management outreach process:

- Early Season – Non-burn Specific Outreach
- Pre Burn – Burn Specific Outreach
- Burn Day – General and Contingency Outreach
- Post Burn Outreach

## **Early Season – Non burn specific -- Two to three months prior to planned burn**

### **Target Audiences:**

- Public Officials
- General Public
- Local print media

### **Message:**

- Burning is likely to occur in the coming months
- General reasons why burning is needed including:
  - area's fire history,
  - wildfire safety,
  - wildlife habitat concerns,
  - resource management, etc.
- What the smoke impacts are and why the public should be concerned
- How the land managers and the air quality managers work together to plan and mitigate impacts from prescribed burns
- Identify potential burns, letting the public that they dates of the burn may change based on resource availability and air quality concerns
- How the land managers will handle naturally ignited prescribed burns.

### **Outreach Methods**

- City Council, County Supervisor meetings
- Fire-Safe Council meetings
- Public workshops and town hall meetings in areas where burning may occur
- Mailings to public health officials
- Media outreach announcing plans for upcoming burns
- Local TV community events calendars
- Begin communicating with districts and states farther from immediate burn areas, letting them know that a burn is planned

### **Resources Available:**

- Fact Sheet: Smoke Management and Public Health
- Fact Sheet: Prescribed Burning and Smoke Management
- Several available prescribed burning resources are available discussing the whys and hows including smoke management webpage

### **Resources Needed:**

- Power Point presentation – 5-15 minutes, short and general so it can be taken to Council meetings
- General news release
- Fact Sheet: Why Use Prescribed Burning?

## **Pre-Burn Outreach – Burn Specific – Conducted shortly before (2-3 weeks) a specific prescribed burn**

### **Target Audiences:**

- Public Health officials
- General public
- News Media
- Populations in neighboring counties and states

### **Message:**

- Date the burn is going to happen
- Specific goals of the burn
- Provide details of the SMP for this specific burn
- What the impacts on the public are likely be, under best and worst case scenarios
- Where the impacts are expected
- How the land and air quality managers have been working together to minimize the smoke impacts
- What the public should do if they experience smoke impacts

### **Outreach Methods**

- Begin any information dissemination in areas farther afield
- Continue information close to burn site
- Focused Public Meetings
  - In areas near the burn, or likely to have smoke impacts
  - Focus on one burn
  - Provide specific information on that burn
    - Identify prescription
    - Identify contingencies, etc.
- News release – include contact at both Air District and Burn agency
- Posters in public areas
- Keep people informed

### **Resources Available**

Fact Sheets mentioned above

### **Resources Needed**

- Power Point presentation with details of individual burn
- Posters that can be consistent between districts and burn agencies
- Template News Release announcing burn

## **During Burn**

### **Burn Day General Information**

#### **Target Audience:**

- News Media
- Public Health Officials
- Populations in neighboring counties and states
- Other land management agencies

#### **Message:**

- Keep local media informed of status of burn
- Keep air districts in neighboring counties and states informed of progress

#### **Outreach Methods**

- Periodic phone calls to the above mentioned networks
- Information Officer Phone Call
- Maintain outreach Contingency Coordinator
  - Responsible for contacting health officials in the event that the burn goes out of prescription and the burn contingency is enacted
  - Communicates with field personnel to monitor where smoke is landing

### **Available Resources**

### **Burn Day Contingency -- Planning for Communication**

#### **Target Audience:**

- General Public
- Local Officials
- News Media

#### **MESSAGE:**

Status of Burn

How the burn is being controlled

Where the smoke impacts are going

What the public Should do in the event of smoke impacts near them

### **Post Burn Outreach**

#### **Target Audience:**

- General Public
- Local Officials
- News Media

#### **MESSAGE:**

- Discuss how the burn went
  - Include complaints

- resource management
- goals achieved/not achieved

**Outreach Methods**

- Post Burn News Conference
- Public Meetings
- Press Release

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